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Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Special Representative Akashi discusses future mandate of UNCRO with Croatian parties; overall situation in Croatia remains stable despite tension in Sector East.

* Secretary-General warns tensions on Rwanda's borders could erupt in violence at any time; calls for urgent action by Government, neighbouring States and international community.

* Department of Humanitarian Affairs to convene meeting of donors in Geneva with view to improving conditions in Rwandan prisons.

* Secretary-General proposes appointment of Rubens Ricupero as head of UNCTAD for four-year term beginning 15 September.

* Special Adviser de Soto to represent Secretary-General at talks with Government of Myanmar in Yangon next week.

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Special Representative Yasushi Akashi is holding consultations with Croatian authorities on the future mandate of the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO), a spokesman for the Organization said today. Mr. Akashi will travel to Belgrade over the weekend to meet with Serb leaders from Sector East. Once it is clear what the parties will accept, the Secretary-General will finalize a report to the Security Council. Meanwhile, the United Nations is expected to begin reducing troop strength in Croatia as early as next week.

UNCRO civilian police have already been redeployed from Sector West to the Zagreb-Belgrade highway to monitor the ongoing exodus of Serbs from Sector North. The Croatian Government has assured the United Nations that its police will prevent attacks on refugees such as occurred on Wednesday. No serious incidents were reported along the highway yesterday or today. However, UNCRO monitors witnessed Croatian police beating 17 people near Vrginmost, and were prevented from intervening in the incident.

The spokesman said the situation was generally stable in Croatia, notwithstanding a high level of tension in Sector East. The situation was also stable in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There was a slight increase in the number of

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firing incidents in Sarajevo, and some sniping incidents were recorded, but no major developments were reported.

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What issues confronting Rwanda must be urgently addressed as tensions on the Zairean border could erupt in uncontrollable violence at any time, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report dated 2 August, he said the Rwandan Government, the countries of the subregion and other members of the international community must be involved in that endeavour. Meanwhile, all sectors of Rwandan society must begin talks in order to reach an agreement on a constitutional and political structure to ensure lasting stability. Such talks must exclude political leaders suspected of planning and directing last year's genocide.

Recalling his visit to the subregion in July, the Secretary-General said instability in one State could have a dramatic effect on all its neighbours. Destabilizing influences, such as armed infiltrations and sabotage, should be prevented through cooperative efforts. An international commission should be established under the auspices of the United Nations to address allegations of arms flows to former government forces. He also suggested the convening of a regional conference to consider the interrelated problems of peace, security and development, with a view to adopting a programme of action. Meanwhile, a technical meeting might be convened to develop concrete measures to implement commitments already undertaken regarding the repatriation of refugees.

The international community had an important role to play in Rwanda's reconstruction and in encouraging repatriation and reconciliation, the Secretary-General continued. He called on States, donor agencies and non-governmental organizations to intensify their efforts to help avert a resumption of violence. He urged the Rwandan Government to ensure respect for human rights and security for all Rwandans, and to continue to encourage the voluntary return of refugees. That would send a clear message to the international community that assistance should be accelerated.

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In response to the Secretary-General's special concern about prison conditions in Rwanda, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs will convene a meeting of donors in Geneva on Monday. The Department envisages a two-pronged strategy to deal with the problem. First, prison capacity would be extended through the rapid establishment of tented or prefabricated additions to existing prisons. Then, the judicial process would be accelerated. There are over 50,000 prisoners in Rwanda, whereas the 12 main prisons have an official capacity of only 12,000.

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The Secretary-General today proposed the appointment of Rubens Ricupero as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for a term of four years beginning 15 September. It is expected that the General Assembly will act to confirm the appointment at a plenary meeting before the opening of its fiftieth session.

Mr. Ricupero has served as Brazil's Minister of Environment and Minister of Finance, and as its Ambassador to the United States and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva. He also chaired the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Contracting Parties and Council of Representatives.

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Special Adviser Alvaro de Soto will arrive in Yangon on Sunday to represent Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the next round of talks with the Government of Myanmar, according to a United Nations spokesman. Since the establishment of the dialogue between the Secretary-General and the Government in September 1994, three rounds of discussions have been held. The objective of the dialogue is to assist in the implementation of resolutions on Myanmar adopted by the General Assembly.

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